



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • DECEMBER 18, 2025 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 22 • LATE CITY EDITION

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VB-G RAM G BILL TODAY

Lok Sabha clears nuclear bill amid Oppn walkout

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE Lok Sabha on Wednesday cleared the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill to open up the nuclear sector for private players. The bill was passed by voice vote amid a walkout by the Opposition members, who raised the issues of public safety and liability in case of a nuclear disaster. Dramatic scenes are likely on Thursday as well, when the contentious VB-G RAM G Bill is expected to be taken up for passage in the House.

The SHANTI Bill was passed after a four-hour debate, setting the stage for opening up the tightly controlled civil nuclear sector for private participation. Opposition MPs, barring those from the Trinamool Congress, staged a walkout during the bill's passage after the government refused to refer it to a Joint Parliamentary Committee or a Standing Committee.

While replying to the discussion on the SHANTI Bill, Union minister Jitendra Singh said the tough provisions of India's

nuclear liability laws led to "silent phobia" in the industry, prompting the government to bring a new comprehensive bill to address concerns.

Congress MP Manish Tewari said by removing nuclear equipment suppliers' liability, the government was putting citizens in harm's way.

"The government will deal only with the operator; it is upon the operator to deal with the supplier," said Singh, Minister of State in the PMO, who oversees the Department of Atomic Energy. He said the operator's liability has been rationalised through graded caps linked to reactor size.

Insurance FDI 100%

The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday passed a bill to raise FDI in insurance to 100% from the current 74%. LS had passed it on Tuesday

Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill on Thursday. Moving the bill on Wednesday, Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said it will ensure all-around development of villages and make them poverty-free.

Congress MP Kodikunnil Suresh said the new bill will break the back of states like Kerala. **P11**



LUCKNOW AQI @ 400, 4th T20I FOGGED OUT

India all-rounder Hardik Pandya wearing a mask during training for the fourth T20I versus South Africa at the Ekana Stadium in Lucknow on Wednesday. The match was delayed for two hours due to "excessive fog" with the Air Quality Index at 400+ (hazardous). Eventually, the match was called off at 9.30 pm without a ball being bowled. Ticket holders will get full refund | P11 | P17

EXPRESS READ

Gruha Lakshmi claims a mistake, says Hebbalkar

Belagavi: Women and Child Welfare Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar said her statement claiming Gruha Lakshmi scheme installments had been cleared up to August 2025 was a "mistake" | P4

India summons B'desh envoy, lodges protest

New Delhi: India on Wednesday summoned the Bangladesh envoy and lodged its protest over plans by certain extremist elements to create a security situation around the Indian mission in Dhaka | P12

BJP alleges minister KBG illegally acquired lake, cemetery in Kolar

NAUSHAD BIJAPUR @Belagavi

POLITICAL temperatures at the ongoing winter session of the legislature soared after Leader of Opposition in the Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy demanded the resignation of Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, alleging that he has illegally acquired ownership rights of a lake and a cemetery in Kolar district, both have reportedly been transferred into the minister's name.

Addressing a section of the media, Narayanaswamy posed a blunt question that set off a fresh political storm. "How does a cemetery become a minister's private property? How was government land transferred into his own name," he

asked, accusing the minister of manipulating official records.

According to the Opposition, the disputed properties include a 20.16-acre lake and a 1 acre cemetery in Narasapura village of Kolar district.

Narayanaswamy alleged that both parcels were reclassified as 'kharab' land in revenue records, paving the way for their transfer. He demanded a comprehensive government inquiry, immediate restoration of the properties to the state and Krishna Byre Gowda's resignation on moral grounds.

Documents accessed by *The New Indian Express* show that Records of Rights (RoR) valid from 2024 list Survey Numbers

Homebound in Oscar shortlist for best international feature

The much acclaimed Bollywood drama by Neeraj Ghaywan is among 15 films shortlisted in the best international feature category at the Oscars. Homebound will compete alongside films like Argentina's *Bel'n*, Brazil's *The Secret Agent* and French drama *It Was Just an Accident*. The film stars Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jethwa and Janhvi Kapoor.



46 (20.16 acres) and 47 (one acre) in Narasapura village as belonging to Krishna Byre Gowda, son of late C Byre Gowda. In one document, the word 'kere' (lake) has reportedly been struck off, while the other parcel is marked as 'kharab' land in brackets.

"Kharab land refers to government land unfit for cultivation. The value of this land runs into crores of rupees," said Tamesh Gowda, BJP Karnataka state secretary and a former candidate from Byatarayana-pura, alleging a serious loss to the public exchequer.

Krishna Byre Gowda responded with a fierce counter, rejecting the allegations as politically motivated and baseless. **CONTINUED ON: P4**

Munir in pickle as Don wants Pak troops in Gaza

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

PAKISTAN'S most powerful military chief in decades is facing a critical test of his newly consolidated authority as the US is pressing it to contribute troops to a proposed international stabilisation force in Gaza, a move analysts say could trigger strong domestic backlash, Reuters reported.

Field Marshal Asim Munir is expected to travel to Washington soon to meet US President Donald Trump, Reuters said. The meeting would be Munir's

third in six months and is likely to centre on Washington's push for Pakistan's participation in the Gaza force.

The proposed deployment is a key pillar of Trump's 20-point Gaza peace plan, which calls for an international force to oversee a transition period focused on reconstruction and economic recovery in the Palestinian territory.

Under the first phase of the plan, a fragile ceasefire took effect on October 10, with Hamas releasing hostages and Israel freeing detained Palestinians. The US officials view the stabilisation force as central to moving the plan into its next phase.



AIRSPACE BAN FOR INDIAN FLIGHTS EXTENDED

Pakistan on Wednesday extended its airspace ban for Indian aircraft by another month till Jan 23. Islamabad closed its airspace in April after the Pahalgam terror attack. The previous extension was to expire on Dec 24. India too imposed a similar ban on Pak flights | P11

For Munir, analysts say, the decision carries significant political risks. Any deployment of troops to Gaza could provoke public uprising in a country where support for Palestinians is strong and overseas military commitments remain politically sensitive.

"Not contributing could annoy Trump, which is no small matter for a Pakistani state that appears quite keen to remain in his good graces — in great part to secure US investment and security aid," said Michael Kugelman, senior fellow for South Asia at the Atlantic Council.

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